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Title: Need to set up a Tea Auction Centre in Dibrugarh, Assam.

SHRI RAMESHWAR TELI (DIBRUGARH) : Assam is the largest tea producing state in the country. It produces more than half of India's tea. It has the distinction of being the largest tea growing region in the world. With more than 800 tea estates, besides having several thousand small tea gardens, the state produces 620 million KGs of tea annually. To facilitate tea trading, Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC) was established in 1970. But for a large tea producing state like Assam, only one tea Auction Centre is not enough to cater to the needs of both the buyers and sellers. Since 80% of Assam tea is produced in the garden located in Upper Assam, there has been a public demand to set up one more tea auction centre at Dibrugarh in Upper Assam.

Surrounded by more than 200 tea gardens, my constituency Dibrugarh is a prime tea producing area. Therefore, a tea auction centre, if set up will help the tea producer a great deal in selling off their produce. Moreover, five districts of Upper Assam namely, Golaghat, Jorhat, Sivsagar, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia which produce over 400 million KGs of tea annually, will be greatly benefitted, if a tea auction centre comes up at Dibrugarh. It may be mentioned in this connection that while West Bengal, which has an annual tea production of 315 million KGs which is nearly half of Assam's has three Tea Auction Centres and Assam though it is the largest tea producing State has only one Tea Auction Centre.

Besides, Guwahati Tea Auction Centre can't handle more than 170 million KGs of tea annually. Therefore, an auction centre at Dibrugarh will not only play a key role as the main vehicle for marketing tea in the region, but at the same time, it will also generate more employment and will provide an opporunity to the tea planters of neighbouring states like Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland to participate in tea trading more effectively.

I, therefore, request the government to kindly take necessary steps to set up a tea auction centre at Dibrugarh in Assam in the greater interests of the people of the region.